

STAFF REPORT: 5/08/2024

PREPARED BY: J. ROSS

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC#2024-00157

ADDRESS: 1601 BAGLEY

HISTORIC DISTRICT: ADJACENT TO CORKTOWN

PROPERTY OWNER/PROPOSED DEVELOPER: MICHAEL D. EISSIAN II

APPLICANT/OWNER: MICHAEL D. EISSIAN II (CK-2003 LIMITED DIVIDEND HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED)

SPPOSORING AGENCY: CITY OF DETROIT, HOUSING REVITALIZATION DEPARTMENT

DATE OF STAFF VISIT: 4/22/2024

SCOPE OF WORK: REDEVELOP SITE WITH MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS (HDC ADVISORY REVIEW UNDER SECTION 21-2-5)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Clement Kern Gardens is a multiple-family residential development that is located directly outside of the southwestern boundary of the Corktown local historic district. The development was erected in 1985 and includes 12 individual buildings which offer 87 units of affordable housing. The Post-Modern style apartment buildings are two stories in height and are clad with vinyl and brick. Windows are vinyl throughout. The main roofline at each building is side gabled. Primary entrances at front façades are inset and are marked by front gabled front-gabled dormers. High metal fencing encloses much of the development. A small park to the east of the development includes a bronze statue of Father Clemen Kern, the individual for whom the development is named.



1601 Bagley, facing northwest. Staff photo taken on 4/22/2024



1601 Bagley, facing northeast within the development's parking lot area. Staff photo taken on 4/22/2024



1601 Bagley, facing northeast within the development's parking lot area. Staff photo taken on 4/22/2024

PROPOSAL

Per the developer/owner of the site, the project will be completed in multiple phases. The current phase/Phase 1 will include the demolition of two existing buildings within the east portion of the site, the erection of six new buildings, and the installation of new landscaping and hardscape according to the following description:

- *Two townhome buildings with twelve units are proposed along Bagley. 10th Street between Bagley and Labrosse will be reconnected as part of the redevelopment. Two three-story flats buildings containing 42 apartment units are proposed along the reconnected 10th Street (east side of 10th) and one four story midrise building is proposed along the west side of 10th Street containing 44 apartment units. A four-story midrise building is proposed along Trumbull and part of Labrosse containing 88 apartment units. This redevelopment includes approx 80% affordable units (30-80% AMI) and 20% market rate.*

Detroit City Code, Sec. 21-2-5, *Effects of Projects on Districts* requires the Commission to provide advisory comment to the Mayor and City Council as to the “demonstrable effects” of any “City-financed, licensed, permitted, authorized or contracted physical development” within or adjacent to an historic district. The sponsoring agency, the City of Detroit Housing and Revitalization Department (HRD) has therefore forwarded the current submission to the HDC for comment because the project has been awarded City incentives and is located outside of, but directly adjacent to, the Corktown Historic District.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- Per the City of Detroit, Housing and Redevelopment Department:
 - The City of Detroit was awarded a \$30 million Choice Neighborhoods Implementation (CNI) grant in May 2021. The City was also awarded a \$5 million Choice Neighborhoods Supplemental Grant in April 2023. Choice Neighborhoods is a grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), established in 2010 by the Obama administration. The Choice Neighborhoods grant will preserve housing affordability and construct new affordable housing throughout Historic and North Corktown. The grant will focus on the redevelopment of Clement Kern Gardens, a publicly assisted property on Bagley Street between Trumbull Avenue and Rosa Parks Boulevard. With the redevelopment, Clement Kern Gardens will provide new affordable, rent-assisted units for its current residents, as well as an additional number of rental units that will be offered at varying rent levels.
 - The Clement Kern Gardens Affordable Housing Development is named in honor of Father Clement Kern, who served the local neighborhood parish, Most Holy Trinity, for 34 years. Due to his lifelong commitment as a community advocate for the Corktown neighborhood, he was immortalized with a statue that is located at Bagley St. and Trumbull Ave. The affordable housing development was constructed in 1985 on residential land that was cleared and reserved for industrial development. In the 1950s during the era of Urban Renewal, the City Planning Commission condemned much of the Historic Corktown neighborhood as “slums.” The area of the neighborhood between Bagley St. and the Detroit Riverfront was cleared and renamed “Westside Industrial.” One of the first major projects constructed was the Holiday Inn Downtown, which is now named the Trumbull & Porter Hotel. While much of Westside Industrial project attracted new industrial development, the site directly north of the Holiday Inn laid vacant. This site was later developed into low income and senior housing and named Clement Kern Gardens. The Westside Industrial project created “superblocks” which

disrupted the historical street grid of the neighborhood. Clement Kern Gardens was constructed on one of these superblocks, featuring 87 housing units over 7 acres. This site plan limits pedestrian connectivity and neighborhood cohesion. Segregated by design, Clement Kern Gardens functions like an isolated gated community where the residents are disconnected from the Historic Corktown neighborhood.

- The project proposes to erect buildings which are generally compatible in material, height, and massing with those in the historic district. Also, the extension of 10th Street through the development will serve to break up its “superblock” layout and will create a better, more walkable connection of the southern portion of the neighborhood to the historic district. It is therefore staff’s opinion that the project will have a beneficial effect on the Corktown Historic District

ISSUES

None

RECOMMENDATION

Section 21-2-5, EFFECTS OF PROJECTS ON DISTRICTS

Per Detroit City Code, Sec. 21-2-5, *Effects of Projects on Districts*, the Commission is required to provide advisory comment to the Mayor and City Council as to the “demonstrable effects” of any “City-financed, licensed, permitted, authorized or contracted physical development” within or adjacent to an historic district. As suggested by Sec. 21-2-5, conditions under which adverse effects generally occur include the following:

- Destruction or alteration of all or part of a resource
- Isolation from or alteration of all or part of a resource
- Introduction of visual, audible or atmospheric elements that are out of character with the resource and its setting
- Transfer or sale of a City-owned resource without adequate conditions or restrictions regarding preservation, maintenance, or use; and
- Neglect of a resource resulting in its deterioration or destruction

As previously stated in the above *Observations and Research* section, staff recommends that the project will have a beneficial effect on the Corktown Historic District,